

VLR- 4/17/73 NRHP- 5/25/73

109-31

Form 10-300
(July 1969)UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Virginia	
COUNTY: Charlottesville (in city)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE 5/25/73

1. NAME	
COMMON: Oak Lawn	
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: Cherry Avenue and Ninth Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Charlottesville (J. Kenneth Robinson, Seventh District Congressman)			
STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: (in city)	CODE 540

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PUBLIC ACQUISITION: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered			
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Mrs. Shelton S. Fife <i>deceased - owned by son.</i>			
STREET AND NUMBER: Oak Lawn, Cherry Avenue and Ninth Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Charlottesville	STATE: Virginia	CODE 22903	CODE 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Albemarle County Court House			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Charlottesville	STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	CODE 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1969 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D. C.	CODE 11	CODE 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

 STATE: Virginia
 COUNTY: Charlottesville (in city)
 ENTRY NUMBER
 DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

I. General Statement:

A. Architectural Character: Oak Lawn is an early nineteenth century dwelling showing Jeffersonian influence.

B. Condition of fabric: Structurally sound, but in need of some repair.

II. Description of the Exterior:

A. Overall dimensions: The three-bay two-story main block with pedimented gable end front is four-bays long and is framed by a two-bay one-story wing on the north and the south. There is a frame shed enclosed porch addition on the west side of the south wing and a similar frame addition off a small one-story one-bay brick addition on the west of the main block.

B. Foundation: Brick.

C. Wall construction: The walls are finely laid in Flemish bond above a water table of all header quarter-round brick, and in a three-course American bond below the water table. Queen closers mark the salient corners. The small western addition on the main block is laid in six -course American bond (the brick for this addition came from the former exterior kitchen). The frame additions are covered with clapboards.

D. Porches: A three-bay, one-story porch with a flat roof serving as the second story balcony shelters the entrance of the main block, is supported by four Tuscan columns and has a simple entablature. A cast-iron geometrically patterned balustrade surmounts the porch.

E. Chimneys: Exterior chimneys arise between the main block and each of the wings. An interior-end chimney is at the west end of the main block.

F. Openings:

1. Doorways and doors: The east entrance has a doorway with architrave trim. Each double door has a large glass window in the upper half. An entrance with similar trim and a six paneled door opens on the upper level of the east facade.

2. Windows: Wooden double-hung windows have nine-over-nine sash and are surrounded by simple trim, not the usual architrave moldings found in most Jeffersonian buildings.

G. Roof: The gable roof of the main block has a pedimented gable end with a lunette over the east facade. The wings also have gable roofs. A wooden box cornice with molding is employed and barge boards are used on the remaining gable ends.

III. Description of the Interior:

A. Floor plan: Both wing rooms and the west room in the main block open off the entrance hall -- the east room of the main block. The room in the brick addition opens to the west of the main block.

B. Stairway: An enclosed dog-leg stair ascends in the northwest corner of the entrance hall. A similar stair ascends from the east wall in the dining room.

C. Wall and ceiling finish: Painted plaster.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Virginia	
COUNTY	
Charlottesville (in city)	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7.

D. Doorways and doors: Doorways have architrave trim and six-paneled doors.

E. Trim: All the rooms have a molded chair-rail and base-board. In the hall and the library the chair-rail and the base-boards employ simple greek moldings on the walls with the fireplaces. The other three walls use a Georgian molding. The cupboards in the west room have symmetrically molded trim with corner blocks. The east room has molded plaster trim around the perimeter of the ceiling and a rosette in the center.

F. Heating: Fireplaces are in every room. The mantel in the entrance hall has dentil work under the broad shelf, a plain frieze and plain pilasters. The other mantels have a plain frieze with a molding and plain pilasters. Each fireplace has an iron fireplace lining with reeded pilasters and a panelled lintel.

IV. Site:

A. Setting: Oak Lawn is set on a hill and looks east over Charlottesville. The house is surrounded by trees thickly scattered over a large lawn, which help protect it from the encroachment of the busy city streets.

B. Outbuildings: A small American bond brick gable roofed building with an exterior end chimney was the original cook's house and is set west of the house.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Oak Lawn, #104-0031
Charlottesville, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 2

Based upon a survey done for a historic district in 2007-8, the following information is to be added to the description of this individually listed resource, which falls within the district boundaries.

7. Architectural Description (additional information):

Constructed in 1822, this 2-story, three-part brick dwelling is an accomplished example of Jeffersonian Palladianism and was constructed by builders who worked for Jefferson on the academic village at the University of Virginia. James Dinsmore, a Scots-Irish builder who worked for Jefferson, is believed to have designed the house and also worked on its construction. The house is comprised of a 2-story, 3-bay, gable-end central brick block flanked by slightly recessed, 1-story, 2-bay brick wings with side gable roofs. The brick walls are laid in Flemish bond above a water table of 3-course American bond with molded quarter-round bricks. The roofs are clad in standing seam metal. Exterior brick chimneys are located between the main block and each of the side wings. An additional interior brick chimney is located at the west end of the main block. The 1-story, 3-bay front portico with Tuscan-column supports and a plain entablature, has a flat roof with a wooden railing of turned balusters. Other details include 9/6- and 9/9-sash wood windows with louvered wooden shutters, a boxed cornice, a lunette window in the front pedimented gable-end, a 6-panel front door, two square 4-light attic windows in the west gable end, and a large glassed-in rear 1-story wing constructed in 1998.

Property Inventory as of 2007 survey:

Dwelling, 1822	contributing
Kitchen, 1822	contributing
Cemetery, ca. 1847	contributing
Cemetery, ca. 1818	contributing
Shed, modern w/ T-1 11 siding	non-contributing

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian☐ 16th Century☐ 18th Century☐ 20th Century☐ 15th Century☐ 17th Century☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Aboriginal☐ Education☐ Political☐ Urban Planning☐ Prehistoric☐ Engineering☐ Religion/Phi-☐ Other (Specify)☐ Historic☐ Industry☐ Philosophy☐ Agriculture☐ Invention☐ Science☒ Architecture☐ Landscape☐ Sculpture☐ Art☐ Architecture☐ Social/Human-☐ Commerce☐ Literature☐ Itorian☐ Communications☐ Military☐ Theater☐ Conservation☐ Music☐ Transportation

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Oak Lawn is a notable example of Jeffersonian Classicism with the Randolph-Semple House in Williamsburg being its design prototype. Built in 1822, the house is believed to have been constructed by workmen employed by Thomas Jefferson at the nearby University of Virginia. Many of these men, strongly influenced by Jefferson, went on to design and erect courthouses, churches, and houses throughout the state. Sequestered from Charlottesville by its large shady lawn, Oak Lawn is a skillfull interpretation of Jefferson's architectural ideas.

The Oak Lawn tract was part of a patent granted to Joel Terrell and David Lewis in the 1730's. Micajah Chiles came into the possession of the property in 1784 and it was inherited by his son, Henry West Alberty (alias Henry Chiles). Alberty sold the tract in 1815 to Jesse Winston Garth who sold 394 acres to Colonel Nimrod Bramham in 1818.

James Fife, business man, farmer, and Baptist Minister, bought the house and property in 1847 and changed the name from Oak Grove to Oak Lawn. Although lots were sold from the farmland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Fife family retained the house and a core of land. Today only five acres remain with Oak Lawn after the City of Charlottesville condemned the remaining acreage for Buford Junior High School in the late 1960's.

G.P.H.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Oak Lawn, #104-0031
Charlottesville, Virginia**

Section 8 Page 3

Oak Lawn was originally listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 5/25/1973 with a period of significance as the 19th century. Based upon a survey done for a historic district in 2007-8, the following information is to be added to the description of this individually listed resource, which falls within the district boundaries.

8. Significance Statement (additional information):

Oak Lawn, the earliest historic resource in the proposed Fifeville-Castle Hill Historic District, stands at the southwest corner of the intersection of 9th Street SW and Cherry Avenue. Originally stretching from Fry Springs on the west to Ridge Street on the east, the remaining parcel of land is approximately 5 ½ acres; however, the setting of Oak Lawn remains surprisingly rural despite its urban location. Constructed in 1822, the main house is an accomplished example of Jeffersonian Palladianism. Built for Col. Nimrod Bramham, a Charlottesville merchant who served in the House of Delegates, the design and construction of Oak Lawn are attributed to James Dinsmore, a Scots-Irish master carpenter who worked on Monticello and the University of Virginia after being brought to Charlottesville by Thomas Jefferson, and is a skillful interpretation of Jefferson's Classical architectural ideas. Bramham died in 1847 and was buried in a cemetery on the property, at which time the property was sold to James Fife, a Baptist minister, farmer, and businessman. Fife was active in the Charlottesville area for nearly 30 years, and it was his name that came to be identified with this area. He died in 1876 and, after an impressive funeral service at his home, was buried in a second cemetery on the property. It was not until 1888 that the land was subdivided into Fife's Lots. The remaining acreage is still owned by members of the Fife family and includes the main house, a brick cook's cottage, and two family cemeteries.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Freudenberg, Anne, "Oak Lawn," unpublished manuscript.
 Nichols, Frederick D., "Oak Lawn," unpublished manuscript.
 Rawlings, Mary, Ante-bellum Albemarle.
 Stevens, William, Virginia House Tour.
 Files of Virginia Historic Landmark Commission.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38° 01' 44"	78° 29' 50"				
NE	38° 01' 44"	78° 29' 43"				
SE	38° 01' 37"	78° 29' 43"				
SW	38° 01' 37"	78° 29' 50"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than ten acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

February, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:

Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN:

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name

Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
 Title _____

Date

4/17/73

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

ATTEST:

 Keeper of The National Register

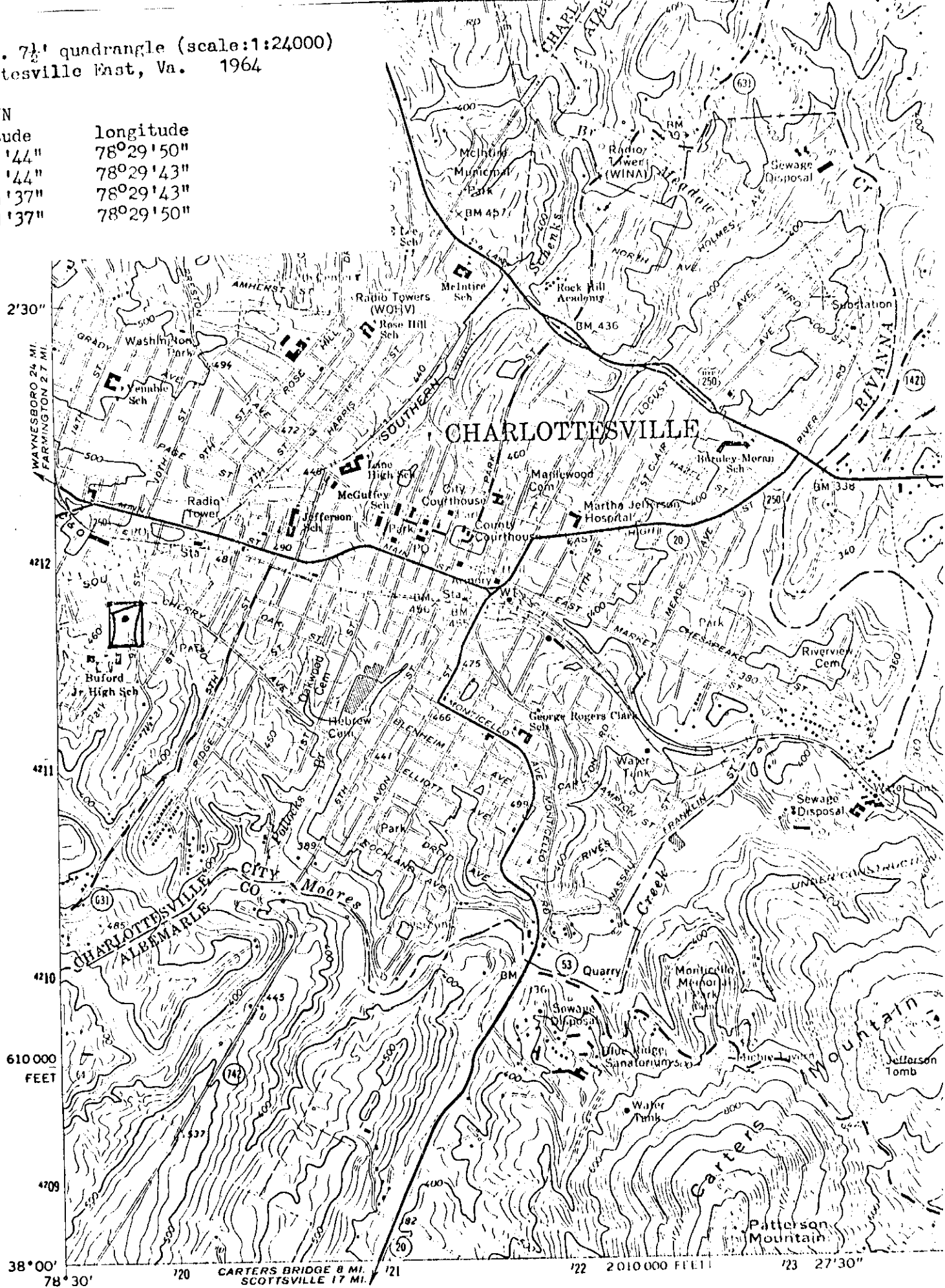
Date

5/25/73

U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
 Charlottesville East, Va. 1964

OAK LAWN

latitude	longitude
NW38°01'44"	78°29'50"
NE38°01'44"	78°29'43"
SE38°01'37"	78°29'43"
SW38°01'37"	78°29'50"



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs

(ALBERNE)
 5259 1 NE

